

Message Text

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70

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 SAM-01 SAB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5625

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

S E C R E T LONDON 15903

E.O. 11652: XEDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, EG, SY, IS

SUBJ: FCO VIEWS ON SYRIAN STANCE

REF: DAMASCUS 3897

1. SINCE CONCLUSION OF SINAI II NEGOTIATIONS, FCO OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN PROSPECTS FOR NEXT US EFFORT TO PROMOTE SYRIAN NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAELIS. BASIC FCO POSITION REMAINS ONE OF PERVASIVE ADMIRATION FOR SUCCESS OF SECRETARY'S TACTICS WITH EGYPTIANS AND ISRAELIS TEMPERED BY RECOGNITION THAT SYRIAN NEGOTIATING POSITION WILL BE A VERY TOUGH NUT TO CRACK. DURING RECENT CONVERSATION WITH FCO NEAR EAST DEPARTMENT HEAD URWICK, HE CITED ASSAD'S OCTOBER 6 SPEECH AND GENERALLY AGREED WITH COMMENT ON IT IN LAST PARAGRAPH OF DAMASCUS REFTEL. AS URWICK PUT IT, ASSAD DID NOT SLAM THE DOOR TO NEGOTIATIONS BUT DID RAISE THE ANTE.

2. URWICK NOTED SYRIAN BASIC POSITION IS STRENGTHENED BY FACT ISRAEL DOES NOT WANT OVER-ALL PEACE ARRANGEMENTS TO COLLAPSE. IN ADDITION TO COPING WITH HARD-LINERS INTERNALLY, AQSAD HAS THE PROBLEM, AFTER ALL THE NASTY THINGS HE SAID ABOUT THE EGYPTIANS FOR REACHING AN AGREEMENT, OF ENSURING THAT THE EGYPTIANS ARE NOT PUT IN A POSITION TO SAY THE SAME THINGS ABOUT HIM. HOWEVER, THE

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SYRIAN MILITARY POSITION IS WEAK, AND ON BALANCE BOTH

URWICK AND ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARY WEIR BELIEVE THAT
IF THERE IS ENOUGH IN THE NEGOTIATIONS TO ENTICE
THE SYRIANS, THEY WILL CLIMB DOWN FROM THEIR PRESENT
POSITION. IN SUM, THE FCO WISHES US WELL AND SUPPORTS
OUR POLICY FULLY, BUT APPEARS TO HAVE FEW IF ANY CON-
STRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS TO OFFER US AT THIS TIME.

RICHARDSON

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NNN

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